

The Great Lakes constitute one of America's most treasured resources and in recent years Congress has focused on protecting this important asset. Lake Erie, whose coastline includes more than 80 miles of territory in the Ninth Congressional District, provides drinking water, recreational opportunities and economic value to millions of people in both the U.S. and Canada.

Lake Erie has developed into a tourist magnet, especially since congressional action revived the lake after its brush with death in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the region's leading tourist attractions depend on a healthy lake, including Cedar Point (recently voted America's greatest amusement park), Sandusky Bay, the Lake Erie Islands, the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and the city of Vermilion.

As the shallowest and warmest parts of the Great Lakes ecosystem, the Western and Central basins of Lake Erie attract literally millions of recreational boaters, anglers and hunters. The Western Basin is ranked among the top 10 birdwatching sites in North America. In so many ways, our region's quality of life and economic future are linked to the health of Lake Erie.

Water Protection

In 2007, Congresswoman Kaptur co-sponsored the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would protect millions of acres of wetlands, including the incomparable Lake Erie marshes. These natural wonders contain some of the richest wetlands on the continent and host millions of migratory songbirds at the crossroads of the two major flyways.

In 1998, the Ontario Government approved the bulk transfer of up to 159 million gallons of water outside of the basin. Congress quickly responded, with Congresswoman Kaptur supporting a Congressional resolution (H.Res. 566) that called on the President and Senate to prevent large-scale water diversions. Two years later, Congress approved with Congresswoman Kaptur's support the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, which contained language directing the states to coordinate a joint policy on Great Lakes water withdrawals.

The Great Lakes Water Compact held out the promise of further protection, but was moved through Congress in less than 20 legislative days and failed to close a loophole that would allow large amounts of water to be diverted by the bottled water industry. Congresswoman Kaptur pointed out this glaring exception and voted against the Compact due to the loophole.

Great Lakes Drilling

Congresswoman Kaptur has long been opposed oil and gas exploration on Lake Erie. In 2001, she supported an amendment to ban Great Lakes drilling. She was encouraged that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 contained a permanent prohibition on Great Lakes drilling. Although the overall bill contained many objectionable positions, the exclusion of Great Lakes drilling represented a permanent response to this threat.

Great Lakes Restoration

With an emphasis on regional collaboration, Kaptur founded what is known as the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership. This partnership has developed a collaborative approach to watershed protection that has brought dozens of federal, state, local governments and many regional nonprofits to the table. With dozens of different partners, this group has combined the resources of its countless partners to pool its resources for a joint restoration strategy.

In the 109th and 110th Congress, Kaptur has co-sponsored the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, the first comprehensive restoration plan for the Lakes. If passed, this legislation would provide billions of dollars for the region to rebuild and restore the natural beauty of our area.